

big a failure as the Royal Commission of 1832-34 was a success. What it achieved was a couple of discoveries which, like many other new truths, discredited and disintegrated existing institutions, without providing any alternative that the nation, at the moment found practicable. The two discoveries were first that the Principles of 1834' had been, almost unawares, gradually abandoned in practice, by the administration of successive Governments, whether Conservative or Liberal, and (2) that there had grown up, during the preceding half century, an array of competing public services which were aiming, not at the prevention of pauperism, but at the prevention of the various types of destitution out of which pauperism arose "

This account gives, with incomparable clearness, and distinguished impartiality, a bird's eye view of the effort that not only occupied the Webbs between 1905 and 1909, but carried them, in 1909, into an entirely new arena of work. From 1905 to the middle of 1912, they were occupied, primarily, with what, for convenience, one may call the Poor Law. They were doing all sorts of other things, as well, their Local Government books were under way. He was still until 1910 an active member of the London County Council. In 1903 he had been made a member of the Royal Commission set up, at the eleventh hour, by Mr Balfour's Government, to review Trade Union law in the light of the Taff Vale Judgment. In

that year, too, as in the years that followed it,
he served
on a Departmental Committee on Technical
Education,
on another on Agricultural Settlement and
Emigration,
and on yet another on the Territorial Army
In 1907,
again, he was a member of the Committee
which devised
the plans for the Census of Production All
this, however
was secondary, their major interest was in
the Poor Law